

# THE LAST S P E E C H AND CONFESSION O F

**James Whitney, Butcher,**

Who was Executed at the *Porters-Bloock* near

**West-Smith F I E L D**

On *Wednesday* the 1<sup>st</sup>. of *February*, 1693.

*With his Pious Exhortations and Prayers, during his Imprisonment since the Sentence of Death past upon him, with his last Legacy, to his Wife and dearest Children.*

Good people,  
**I** Was born at *Stevenidge* in the County of *Hertford*, about 20 Miles distance from *London*, my Father left my Mother with me and several Children in their Minority and was reported to go in to the North an Officer in the Excise, but never was afterwards hard of or how he ended his Life, but my Mother doing her honest part did bring us up and gave us good Education, she put me an Apprentice to a Kinsman one Mr. *George Hitchin*, a Butcher a man of good Reputation and Credit, where, after some time, letting off a Peice hurt my left Thumb which was cut off; and not being able to do him any Service I whent to *Cheston*, and their settled and Married: Some time after I tooke the *Bear Inn*, which with the Company their comeing, fell into thee way of House-breaking, and after the High-way; and so continued in this wicked-course of Life till I was taken at *White-Chappel*.

If wishes could do any good, I would have wished my self in the greatest slavery that ever man underwent, so that I might escape the Punishment that now hangs over my head. I am now caged up like some wild Beast, or ravenous Bird, and not lik a Man loaded with Irons, but more with the heart piercing Tongues of the unruly Ra-

ble as I past along the streets to this place; there goes a Rogue, crys one, a High-way-man says another, a Villain, a Housebreaker, says the third, every Boy had some opprobrious name or other to cast on me. Sad strange, *the Pit that I digged for another, I am fallen into my self*. How do I reflect on my self, O great Lord God of Heaven and Earth, whose power is above the apprehension of a poor Sinner, who am justly punished for my Sins and wickedness; nay, if I had been ten thousand times more Punished, than I am, I do confess I should justly have deserved it; if thou hadst thrown me down into Hell for the least of my Sins, I could not have blamed thy justice. If I had been in Chains here for the sake of Christ or his holy Gospel, how happy should I now be? how should I have gloried in my Fetters? and prayed God for his great mercy, that he thought me worthy to suffer for his sake. But on the contrary I am here for committing these great and hainous Sins of Robbery, which thou hast made me sensible of, those many, crying and abominable Sins I have been guilty of, and that my heart is not hardned against thee and thy ways so much, but thou in thy infinite mercy canst forgive: Therefore with all humility I humbly prostrate my self at the Foot-stool of thy Grace, imploring the assistance of thy



thy holy Spirit, and to save my poor sinful Soul, for Christ Jesus his sake.

## A Prayer upon my being Sentenced to Death.

**G**ood Lord though I am now Sentenced to Die for my great Offences both to thee and man, (and in a short time) I beg thee look down in mercy upon me sinful wretch, and give me a true and penitent Heart, to be diligent in worshipping of thee: And Merciful Lord God, I earnestly beg of thee upon my Knees to give me the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, and grant that the delusions of the Devil may have no power over me: And though now I am Sentenced to die such an ignominious Death; yet for my Sins my Savior underwent a worse, grant I beseech thee, that by them I may not Crucifie him over again, nor be Condemned to inhabit with the Devil and his Angels, but to live with thee, my blessed Lord and Saviour, for whose sake and Merits alone I beg thy abundant Mercy. Amen.

Now I have been before my Earthly Judge, who can only Condemn the Body, but cannot hurt the Soul, Lord, I beseech thee when thou Summonest me to appear at the Bar of thy Justice to give an account what I have here done in this Life; be pleased I humbly pray thee to give me a Pardon of all my Sins, and speak Peace to my poor Soul, through Jesus Christ, my blessed Lord and Redeemer. I am going to suffer Death for those heinous Crimes I have done. I do confess they are Death by the Law of the Land, and there is too many that use the same, but God forgive them and turne their Hearts, and that they may take warning by me for the future. Now let me beg of you that are here present, to have a care and leave off Sinning which I have been very much guilty of; the product of which, hath brought me to commit several other Crimes for which I have deserved Death: O, Lord what miserable and unexpected Mischiefs have I brought my self into by my own private and wicked Devices, being too apt to give way to the Temptations of the Devil, that common Enemy to all Man-kind: Let every good Man take warning by me and such other like Examples that are before you; and let all pray to Almighty God to keep them from Temptations in this wicked World: And that you would all make good use of every Example, so that it may ground you the better in the Practice of true Religion and Godliness. Let Men have a care of slighting the Mercies

of God, and not make a Scoff and a Mock at it; lest God gives you up to such like Evils as I have been guilty of, and drawn into. And then God will have more Honour, and the Gospel more Credit: and many a Soul will be saved from an Ignominious Death, and Death Eternal. I beg of you all that are not yet taken, at this time, once more to be more wary how you order your Lives and Conversations in this World, and consider what a height of Sin you are drawn to, and what Power the Devil gets upon you, especially when you too much yield to his Allurements, in the diversities of his Temptation.

And since a short time will put a period to my Life and I must leave the World and you, my dearest Wife, I shall leave you a few Instructions as my last Legacy, which may be a Comfort and Support to you my dear in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation: In the first place, let it be your chief care to perform your Duty towards God with all Diligence; let your Prayers be as frequent if possible, with my dear Children and the rest of your Family, I leave them solely to your Pious Care; so let it be your constant endeavour to instruct and breed them up in all Godliness and Honesty; Let them be Reverent and Devout at Divine Worship at Church, and let them be employd at home in reading good Books, and every thing else that may tend to their Edification; so that your Light shining before Men, they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven, is the hearty Prayres of your Dying Father.

Newgate January,  
31<sup>th</sup>. 1693.

J. Whitney.

**O** Merciful God and loving Father! O Blessed Son our Saviour! O Holy Ghost our Comforter! be with me, and hear me, and grant my Petitions: Pardon good God, both my Sins of Error and Presumptuousness, all my known and secret Sins, and let the blood of thy dear Son make attonement for all: Sanctifie these my Afflictions to me; support me in all my bitter Conflicts; carry me through the agonies of Death, with a Holy Resolution; give me the assistance of thy Spirit, direct and guide me in my last Moment, and afterwards receive me into thy glorious Habitation, amongst Angels and the Spirits of just Men made Perfect, that with them I may sing Praises to my God, and to the Lamb for ever more. Lord Jesus receive my Soul. Amen. Amen.